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English 2010

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You got a text

Can people still communicate openly and honestly without text message? Is text messaging taking over our willingness to speak and connect for real? Where are we going with text messaging? What is the real message we send when we text someone? Young people are in love with texting because it is convenient. They don’t have to go through the stress of introducing themselves; they don’t have to develop a conversation or break the ice. A text is just a short question and you get a short response back.

They sneak their smart phones into their classrooms or into their backpacks when their coach is giving some instructions out during water break or half time. Even better, in the middle of a family event they are texting, avoiding the communication and interaction with family members. It is very convenient and easy to say” I am busy on my phone! Don’t interrupt me!”” I am building a wall around me;” sort of no trespassing zone. It is their new way of communication. As Debra Viadero mentions in her article in reference to teenagers and text messaging, “Text messaging has become the primary way that teens reach their friends” (Viadero).

Other people use text messaging as a way to communicate important things throughout the day. Spouses send texts back and forth. I have heard so many women complaining that their real connection has been lost because of text messaging. At the end of the day husband and wife are still on their phones texting, this time, with other people.

It is true. Texts are very helpful when it comes to, for example, scheduling a meeting: you type a group message and send it out. My question is: are we truly communicating and connecting or are we avoiding deeper and open interaction? How many times we are in social events and suddenly the conversation is absent and everyone is on their phones. Sadly the message is” I have my shield in my hands.” “I don’t want to talk”. Setting a new personal space? Comfort zone?

Where is the joy of sharing your thoughts and being able to read other people‘s body languages? That’s the special interaction that a conversation face to face brings.

Have you ever thought or wonder why in our state, Utah, texting while you’re driving is forbidden but not being on your phone? Let me tell you what my Political Science class found out last year. Politicians are too old to text but they are not too old to talk on their phones on their way to the Capitol Building. I am pretty sure they get a lot done in their commute time.

I am not against texting. I think it is a very good tool of short communication. Just to mention, when we have to reach out to our kids or have them to meet you at a certain spot, when we need to share a contact’s phone number or address. What I am not happy about is relying on text messaging as our most valuable way to communicate and connect with others. Text can’t replace our gestures. Can we read our tone through instant message? Can a text replace the emotional support that a hug or a pat on the back brings? I refuse to quit reading all the expressions in other people faces while I am talking in person. We as human beings have the unique talent to interpret the feelings and words our soul is delivering in conversations. Even with all the graphic emotions that cell phones are loaded these days, none of them can provide the warmth of real conversation.

I get passionate when it comes to cultural aspects in this topic .To illustrate, here it goes a short story. In my culture we sit around the table not just to eat. That instance is a sacred opportunity to share food that was prepared with love and a moment to share how our day went. We argue, we laugh, and we build family moments and review family stories. We communicate, we nurture our body, and we nurture our spirit too. You get the point. It is a very important ritual that requires all your senses there. So when my kids have their phones on their laps and stop being present because they are responding a text message, then is when all my ancestors come to me and I take phones away with the determination of honoring verbal communication.

Is very sad when I go to a restaurant and observe other people around me and see them checking on their phones. For me they are choosing not to connect.

In other words, I understand technology and the advantages that come with that. I do like to have my phone to let my kids know that I am going to be a little late to pick them up. I like the progress that a modern life brings. What I refuse to do is give the power of spoken words to text message and let them be in charge of my major source of communication. I am demanding my power to set the limits when text messages are taking over human interaction and I encourage you to claim that same power.

# Works Cited

Viadero, Debra. "Text Messaging." *Education Week* (2010): p 5. Academic Search Premier. Web. 19 09 2013.